DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 286 781 SO 018 164

AUTHOR Shapiro, Joan Poliner; Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll
TITLE The "Other Voices" in Contemporary Ethical Dilemmas: The Value of the New Scholarship on Women in the Teaching of Ethics.
PUB DATE 23 Apr 87
NOTE 34p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of American Educational Research Association (68th, Washington, DC, April 20-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Altruism; *College Curriculum; *College Instruction; Controversial Issues (Course Content); Course Content; *Ethical Instruction; *Ethics; Females; Higher Education; Moral Development; Moral Issues; Moral Values; Scholarship; Social Attitudes; Social Problems; Values; *Values Education; *Womens Studies

ABSTRACT

This paper indicates the need for women's studies ethics courses and the examination of student concepts of morality. It proposes the ethical study of social problems not usually considered in undergraduate classes and illustrates the importance of the study of historical perspectives and situational ethics in the teaching of complex contemporary social problems. A women's studies ethics course was introduced to undergraduates in the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania. It provides a broad political and social justice approach and attempts to move student thinking from individual needs to social responsibility in both private and public life. The course highlights problems of inequality and the ethics of racism, sexism, classism, imperialism, and exploitation. Emphasis is placed upon examining the social changes affecting the choices students must make when they face ethical dilemmas. Topics include such issues as abortion, sexuality, reproduction technology, and medical ethics during different historical periods. As a result, students learn that answers are not always absolute, but must sometimes be based on situational ethics. The course outline is included as an appendix. (JHP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED286781

THE "OTHER VOICES" IN CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL DILEMMAS: THE VALUE OF THE NEW SCHOLARSHIP ON WOMEN IN THE TEACHING OF ETHICS

by

Joan Poliner Shapiro

and

Carroll Smith-Rosenberg

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Joan Poliner Shapiro

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SO018164

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The "Other Voices" in Contemporary Ethical Dilemmas: The Value of the New Scholarship on Women in the Teaching of Ethics

by

Joan Poliner Shapiro
Women's Studies Program
and Graduate School of Education
and
Carroll Smith-Rosenberg
History Department and
Psychiatry Department, Medical School,
University of Pennsylvania

Address all comments to:
Joan Poliner Shapiro
Women's Studies Program
106 Logan Hall
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104
Phone: (215) 898-8740

Paper to be presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., April 23, 1987.

The "Other Voices" in Contemporary Ethical Dilemmas: The Value of the New Scholarship on Women in the Teaching of Ethics

> "Feminist ethics, therefore, now poses the question: Is it good for women? --- In this way, feminist theorists seek the re-visioning of moral philosophy. The feminist imperative is to challenge the hegemony of male ethical theory and to insist on 'the woman's voice'(Pearsall, 1986, 266)."

Objectives

The objectives of this paper are four-fold: 1.) to indicate the need for ethics courses which value the "other voices" -- the voices of the marginal and the disempowered, of those who abjure the values of competition and success and uphold those of cooperation and caring, of those who value the private above the public; 2.) to critique the assumptions of liberalism from the perspective of these "other voices" and in this way to reexamine and possibly reform the presumptions of morality and ethics students bring to the class; 3.) to propose a wider range of critical social problems than are currently considered in traditional ethics classes, taking into account the concerns of women as well as of men; 4.) to illustrate the importance of historical perspective and situational ethics to help understand complex contemporary social problems and to demonstrate the strengths of these approaches through written responses of students to critical issues.

Theoretical Framework

Ethics was a central component of the classical curriculum of the 19th Century. Moral character was used as a criterion for selection of new professors; college presidents and other administrators stressed moral and ethical issues in their addresses to students and faculty (Bok, 1982, 117). However, with the 20th Century, this moral voice became increasingly muted. Skepticism, doubt, and ambiguity undercut earlier ethical assuredness. By the mid-20th Century, a much more "value-free" learning attitude permeated most secular institutions of higher education. The 1970's and 1980's have seen a formal reappearance of ethical concerns on college campuses. The first causes for this change were undoubtedly political -- the civil rights and feminist movements, the Vietnamese War and later military involvements. A second and in many ways far more fundamental challenge to our earlier "value-free" assumptions came from biotechnology, which has literally altered our visions of life and death, of reproduction and of health. All have set the stage for the return of the social and moral conscience of college administrators and faculty. Or, to put it another way:

> Many of the social institutions that have historically served as the glue of modern social existence - the church, the family, local government, the schools, the armed forces, the police - have been diagnosed as seriously ailing or certified as dead by countless publications, studies, commissions, and panels (Caplan and Callahan, 1981, pp.ix-x).

In an effort to provide answers to what might be perceived to be a moral breakdown in society, formal courses that address a broad spectrum of ethical issues now abound. In fact, well over twelve thousand ethics courses exist in the U.S., and most of them were created since 1970 (Bok,1982, 123).

Focusing on philosophical and historical readings or examining professional ethics for pre-professional students these new offerings assist students in exploring their own reasoning on important moral issues in the past and present. Often the basic courses turn to the classical writers of Western civilization, to Aristotle, Plato, Locke, Hobbes, Bacon, Descartes and Kant, or they focus closer to our own time on the near classical work in moral development of Piaget and Kohlberg. Still others explore ethical issues specific to contemporary professions (Ehrlich, 1987). However, what appears to be lacking, at both the basic and applied levels, are the voices of the marginal and oppressed, of those who because of race, gender, religion, ethnicity or poverty have not played a central role in the evolution of Liberal individualism. These "other voices" frequently did not value abstract reasoning , viewed the law with bitter skepticism, embraced alternative values and ways of thinking and expressing. Carol Gilligan (1981, 1982) has captured some of these alternative voices, primarily those of middle-class women who spoke continuously of care, concern, and fidelity in the private spheres. Still "other voices" extend these private values into the public domain to address the needs of those who are perceived to be marginal and those who have suffered injustice. While abstract justice receives attention in ethics courses, injustice seldom does. Under the guise of justice, what prevails is a form of late 19th Century liberalism, where the individual is central to most ethical decisions.

The focus of our ethics course was to provide a broad political and social justice approach -- moving students from individual needs in the private and public spheres to social responsibility and altruistic emotions in

both spheres (Noddings, 1986; Roland Martin, 1984; Sichel, 1985). Problems of inequality and difference were very much a part of the design of our course. The ethics of racism, sexism, classism, imperialism and exploitation were areas to be explored. With support from the university administration, we were able to introduce the new Women's Studies ethics course to undergraduates in the School of Arts and Sciences.

The Pedagogy of Ethics Courses

At the university level, ethics has been treated as an important offering especially for its subject matter content. However, at the primary and secondary levels of education, not only the content but the pedagogy of ethics courses have been taken very seriously. Educators have legitimated the belief that the "role of the school is not simply to make children smart, but to make them smart and good" (Ryan, 1986, p.223). To achieve this goal of smart and good students, teachers have moved from an interest in the methodologies used to teach values clarification in the 1960's (Raths, Harmin and Simon, 1966; Metcalf, 1971) to the moral education stage development techniques in the 1970's (Kohlberg, 1976; Kohlberg, 1981; Kohlberg and Turiel, 1971; Mosher, 1980; Purple and Ryan, 1976) to a more of a back to basics ethical approach in the 1980's.

While attracting many disciples, the values clarification method was criticized for its failure to provide young people with a moral perspective at a time when such a perspective was greatly needed (Mosher and Lockwood, 1978). Analysis using values clarification felt comfortable to teachers as it did not ask them to state a position for themselves, but merely to act as the clarifier for students exploring options and

competing philosophies. Critics of values clarification have charged that it asked students to determine their beliefs in an ethical and historical vacuum (Mosher and Lockwood, 1978). They argued that without that sense of history and knowledge of important social movements, young people have floundered. Teachers may also have felt helpless as they silently listened to beliefs and opinions, often expressed by the most verbal or the most persuasive youngsters, that might be at odds with their own perceptions of "good" character development.

The moral education movement did not affect pedagogy as directly as did the values clarification movement. Through the writings of such scholars as Lawrence Kohlberg however, it did make a significant impact on research. Although actual stages of moral growth were acknowledged, once again the student had to deal with a neutral adult figure who administered the dilemmas. "Right" and "wrong" were values never evoked. While serving as an effective learning device for academics who administered the moral dilemmas, to the student, it awakened conflicting and frequently disturbing emotions.

Partly in reaction to these movements, William Bennett (1984), head of NIE, and Bill Honig (1985), California state superintendent for public instruction, and others have reasserted the need for ethical education. The ethical perspective they expoused does not reflect these later movements but employs such traditional cannonical spokesmen as Aristotle and Jefferson, the former a defender of a patriarchal, inequitable and slave society and the latter a slave owner. At a time of complexity and change, with new social movements and novel economic and technological forces continuing to challenge values and forms of conduct, Bennett and

Honig returned to ethical systems developed in worlds which did not seriously question the ethics of racism, sexism, classism, imperialism and economic exploitation. Bennett and Honig also indicated that there was a need to transmit culture to the young and with it ethical principals and values. But whose culture should be transmitted and whose ethical principals and values should be taught?

In our Women's Studies ethics course, we examined the complexities and the social changes affecting the choices our students must make when they face an ethical dilemma. Unlike values clarification, we never allowed our students to flounder in an historical vacuum. Our students received a basic understanding of how society viewed such issues as abortion, sexuality, reproductive technology, medical ethics, etc. over time. What emerged, with this historical background, was the need not for absolutes, but for a form of situational ethics.

Even the concept of moral dilemmas, which we take foregranted, appeared to have quite broad social implications when placed in historical perspective. As American society became increasingly heterogeneous, as old values were disrupted by difference (i.e., race, ethinicity, class, religion), as the polarization of public and private solidified, gender became much more of a problem. As technology and science developed, human potential grew, these and other changes made us turn to ethical dilemmas more and more as a sensible way to deal with complex issues and place them in their appropriate social context. The dilemmas surrounding abortion provided rich material for studying the impact of different social contexts.

One example that proved particularly suggestive involved the question as to whether to terminate a pregnancy when ambiocentesis indicated the child would be born with Downs Syndrome. The age and the financial resources of both parents, whether they have other children or will be able to have other children at a later date, the parents' jobs or career patterns were only a few of the issues we examined. We also raised questions from the perspective of the nation and the world. How could the health care dollars of parents, the state, the World Health Organization be best allocated -- In preserving the life of a Downs Syndrome baby? In caring for American children already born" In caring for the Third World children threatened by starvation, Aids, Glaucoma? What is the individual, parents and the individual nation state's responsibility to the whole? Where does the private stop and the public begin?

Despite this commitment to a situational ethical approach, we, as the instructors, did not pretend to a value-free perspective both because that seemed unfair to the students and because it contradicted the feminist perspectives we avowed. Many feminist researchers have questioned whether a teacher or investigator should be objective, removed and non-judgmental (Acker, Barry and Esseveld, 1983; Coyner, 1980; Duelli-Klein, 1980; Eichler, 1980; Nebraska Feminist Collective, 1983; Shapiro and Reed, 1984, 1987; Westkott, 1979). Thus, we expressed our perspectives as ones we had carefully evaluated and openly discussed, accepting student criticisms and student differences. We felt that such an approach encouraged discussion and underscored the acceptability of difference of opinion in a heterogenous and rapidly changing society.

Feminist Ethics

Beyond dealing with methodological considerations, feminist scholars have recognized that their courses challenged traditional value theory and moral issues. Pearsall coined the concept of "feminist transvaluation" of value theory. In this class, that is precisely what we did. We challenged the male model of ethics and values, or as Pearsall wrote:

> "Traditional value theory is, of course, male value theory, and it has been done as (male) theory-building is characteristically done. The standard approach is to carve out areas for investigation, formulate questions and a methodology for dealing with those questions, and then allow the researchers in a given area to conduct specialized endeavor.---
>
> Feminist considerations arose quite outside the academic world of traditional (male) value theory. To understand the transvaluation of value theory in feminist thought, we need to understand the revolution in feminist thinking (xi)."

The new scholarship on women and the revolution in feminist thought has indeed had an impact on ethics courses taught by faculty exposed to Women's Studies. We have moved from the traditional ethics courses focused on Aristotle's question: "What kind of life shall I best lead?" to that of acknowledging the constraints on free will that women have had to endure. To quote Pearsall:

> "Feminist ethics starts, in one sense, with the realization that Aristotle's famous question in 'male-stream' philosophy does not - or has not - applied to women. As de Beauvoir says, women have been objects and not subjects. By that she means that women have been denied the right to be full moral agents; they have not been those who 'choose a life'."(266)

As feminists, we focused on issues seldom explored by philosophers and other scholars interested in ethics, but of very real importance to us as women. We heard the women's words and ethical concerns in the past (Smith-Rosenberg, 1975, 1985) and we learned to listen for them in the present. Most of our issues centered around the body -- not as an object, but as a subject. Without rights over our own individual body, we knew as women we had nothing.

Although we, as teachers, had firm stands on certain issues such as pro-choice and violence against women, we tolerated different viewpoints. Students were made to feel that their own opinions were of real significance. We also tended to have more flexible complex opinions on numerous issues -- i.e., in the areas of pornography, reproductive technology. On these topics, the doubts and ambiguities exposed could be uncomfortable for some students many of whom demanded a clear-cut opinion from authority figures. Ambiguity created severe tensions for these students. They found the expression of diverse perspectives and even disagreements among faculty members particularly unsettling. Yet we had organized the course expressly around ambiguities and differences. We had, for example, invited two economics professors to lecture to the class, one for and one against the concept of comparable worth; a male Women's Studies major and a female faculty member took differing stands on the topic of pornography. All gave very valid reasons for their positions taking moral issues into account. Troubling to some, this ambivalence proved to be beneficial to numerous students who needed to learn to sort out their own values. This was demonstrated by the fact that many students chose controversial issues more often than simple ones as topics for their final papers.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

We sought to develop in classroom discussions a form of situational ethics that would enable students to take into account subtleties and complexities of many modern day ethical dilemmas. Although students often craved the right answer - the easy answer - this ethics course didn't offer them that. Instead, the course provided: historical background to each controversial issue; experts who could discuss diverse ways of viewing topics; and an intellectual process using ethical dilemmas. Sometimes anger ensued, but it was important for students to sort out who they were and what they believed in as well as to deal with doubt, indecision and ambiguities.

Above all, there was an earnest effort to try to encourage students to look beyond themselves and their needs. There was a conscious attempt to move students from selfishness to altruistic emotions and, again, to perceive the differences inherent in modern societies. Issues of sexuality and reproduction proved the easiest to us in our efforts to get students to recognize and accept difference. Economic and racial issues led them to perceive their own class biases and to look beyond America to the needs of a world community. Health care issues evoked this sense of social responsibility and empathy for those who faced inadequate health care and coverage -- because they were homeless, because they lacked access to health plans, because of their types of jobs. We examined the feminization of poverty. Finally, we sought to introduce students to an ethics of care and concern at the private level and then to extend these values and emotions to the public level. Our course attempted to respond to the advice of Sichel (1985) who wrote:

"---There should be attention to the considerable limitations of a Kantian ethics or the language of rights. Such a critique would then recognize that the ethics of caring or altruistic emotions is a necessary aspect of all morality, not merely valid for the private domain or poviding a tension with an ethics of rights. Accordingly, the language of rights and the language of responsibility, the Kantian ethic and an ethic of altruistic emotions would be integrated into one moral theory which would apply whether moral dilemmas occur in the public or private domain. While the integration or combined form of the two moralities is a complicated, difficult endeavour, the intellectual effort of developing such a moral philosophy is necessary at the present time." (158-159)

Data Source and Methods for the Study

The data for this study were drawn from approximately ninety students who completed the introductory Women's Studies course, "Women and Men and the Ethical Crisis in the 1980's." This course has been offered three times and has met with considerable success. The students were a diverse group in terms of race, class, and ethnicity. Most were first and second year undergraduates, new to Women's Studies; a few were older continuing education students; and the majority were women. We will present examples from students' writings and answers to ethical dilemmas to illustrate their responses to complex moral and social issues.

The Voices of Students Addressing Ethical Issues

In this section of the paper, the voices of students will be heard. Their voices clearly show the problems they faced as they began to deal with ambiguity, complexity and situational ethics. Although a number of the students came to our course with what they perceived to be were clear and moral stances on certain issues, as the course developed their words often reflected confusion and sometimes demonstrated changes of attitudes. They indicated as well opinions to the readings, to the guest speakers and to

the pedagogy used in the course. To broaden their vision about certain issues we asked students to read such works as Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Yellow Wallpaper, Tillie Olsen's I Stand Here Ironing, Eldridge Cleaver's Soul on Ice, Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin, and Alice Walker's The Color Purple. Combined with these literary works, a number of social science readings were assigned. Additionally, invited faculty from our own institution and neighboring ones provided insights and understandings on the new scholarship on women. (See syllabus in Appendix A.) Further, from a pedagogical standpoint, as the co-teachers were an historian and an educator, both an historical perspective and a contemporary analysis of social problems were provided on each issue. In the following pages, we'll examine students' reactions to issues of feminism, homosexuality, abortion, race and pornography.

On Feminism

During the first week of class, a female student read The Yellow Wallpaper and expressed the following frustrations in the journals we required each student to keep:

> "O.K. I just finished The Yellow Wallpaper. We discussed it in class. I'm not sure if I like the book or the class. I want to be honest and I don't want a bad grade. Well, I don't have to turn this in. I was excited to take a Women's Studies class because I want to discuss and learn things about culture - my culture, and about me. I also want to see the different perspectives between east Philadelphia and West L.A. The Yellow Wallpaper first definitely was one of the wierdest books I've read. I would have thought it would remind me of I Never Promised You a Rose Garden or maybe Sybil, but it didn't really. First I was struck by the lack of assertiveness she had. How could he ALWAYS be right? How frustrating! And the Dr. didn't seem to help - obviously since she went a little bonkers. Also, the description was intense! I could see her seeing this lady, and I believed it was there."

As the class continued, this same young woman, who previously had no sense of history about her "culture" -- a woman's culture -- began to change in her perspective towards the main character in The Yellow Wallpaper and her apparent docile acceptance of injustice. What follows is almost a stream of consciousness as the student began to deal with injustice, marginality, ambiguity and doubt. She stated:

> "In class, we talked about a basis for our society and things going on now. The deal with the moral majority, wanting complete control over their children, a new Conservative view and how this is or can be stemming from the Greek culture where the father actually owned his children -- The Yellow Wallpaper fits in, I gather, because of what the woman kept saying about her being inferior. Her husband has control, respect, and success. He treats her like a child. As you watch her go mad your emotions get involved. It's horrifying to read about her perceptions changing and her pain.--- Her confusion and oppression scare me. Is our society so different? Are our society's expectations of gender roles and power relations so different? Maybe I didn't like the class because suddenly I'm looking at things I don't want to see. I see injustice, pain, etc. in The Yellow Wallpaper, but that is different from my life. I do want to see how this course affects my life and if it does. This woman was a good education."

By the end of the semester course, this same young women offered the following words:

> "Well, that's it. This class is really over and I am definitely glad I took it. I didn't like it in the beginning. Now I feel I've learned just how much I don't know and that I have a great deal to experience and learn and read!! I want to read this journal in a year and see that I've learned more and have new views."

On Homosexuality

Towards the beginning of the semester, one young man expressed his moral stance on homosexuality in this way:

> "However, while I sympathize with the plight of gays. I cannot honestly tell you that I condone their actions. I won't stop them from expressing their sexuality, but at the same time, I am repulsed by it. And here it comes...' I think it is morally wrong.' I really don't understand how two people of the same sex can be involved sexually with one another. It just wasn't meant to be. Man and woman were made for one another. --- It just seems very wrong."

hat it is my responsibility to make time for the child and do all I could for him/her. I was shocked to see that I would be the only one to have the baby. I feel that I could achieve so much joy in watching my child grow up and succeed in life. I'd give my child all of my support and love."

This young man went through quite an emotional experience reaching the realization that he was different in the context of the class -- noow could society be so ignorant of lesbianism. Indeed, one could rephrase the question: How has society for such a long period of time been so ignorant of the rights of women?"

It is quite clear that while this young man made some changes in his thoughts on the topic of homosexuality, he was much more comfortable accepting lesbianism in women and seeing it as a problem of sexism and women's second class position in all of society than dealing with the problem of gay men -- an issue closer to him as a male in society.

Another young man in the class did not make an outright moral condemnation of homosexuality, but he did describe his feelings when he was asked to play a gay man in a play written by one of our guest speakers. He said:

> I played Tom in Bob's --- play. It was a strange scene - here I was pretending to be a homosexual. I was actually supposed to touch another man - Bob specifically said so. I couldn't do it - I remember when my partner touched me - it wasn't affectionate, like it was supposed to be, it was macho. He kind of slapped me on the back and said, 'Well Tom...'

Involvement in the play did indeed make an impact on this individual and his honesty was refreshing. However, this young man had a long way to go. Growth did indeed occur and yet ambiguity and doubt persisted. At the end of the course he asked:

"I would say that I enjoyed this class. But it was, however, not quite what I expected. -- Were we supposed to have any fixed opinions after this or just general 'knowledge' of the issues?"

The moral issue of tolerance towards or intolerance of homosexuality figured prominently in the journals of the men in the class. Obviously, this was a topic of importance to them and one they wished to explore, although this was not always initially clear to them. Dealing with doubt rather than certainty seemed to have a very real impact on them. Once the self-assured veneer was removed, two young men had to face the issue of sexuality directly. It was interesting to note that the second student when entering the class had written:

"When I decided to register for this class, I kind of felt like an alchoholic going to his first AA meeting. I didn't think that I was a blatant sexist, but I knew that I frequently used sexist stereotypes and made sexist jokes."

By the end of the course, although very ambivalent, it was clear that this young, hispanic man was thinking deeply and reshaping some of his moral stances-- not that he was comfortable with doubt or complexity -- but from our own vantage point of instructors he was growing.

On Abortion

On the issue of abortion, one female student expressed her feelings on this topic in a most compelling way:

"This week we spoke and read of abortion. I learned that it is much more than just a question of fetus life. I have been searching for a way of articulating the way I feel every time the abortion issue is raised. On the surface, it's medical talk, talk of fetus life and fetus death. but deep down where it matters, it's talk of autonomy of womanhood of my life, my death. The issue of abortion, therefore, embraces the very essence of the woman's movement, as I see it. It becomes a symbol for freedom. The body politic looms over women as they try to assert a voice, a body, a sphere of their own."

A male in the class thought very differently on the topic of abortion and had to face his own as well as women's reactions to the issue through an ethical dilemma. He wrote:

> "I want to comment on the dilemma that we discussed in class. I was, well sort of frightened that in my group of five women and one male, that I was the only one who would have the child. People brought up points like not being able to afford it, not being able to have enough time for it..etc.. The only answer that I respected was that 'I wouldn't want it for selfish reason.' She was being very honest and said what I thought everyone else was trying to avoid. She said that she wouldn't be able to deal with the fact that she had a baby with Downs Syndrome."
>
> "----I want my own child that is a part of me. I don't feel that I could love an adopted child in the same way. I feel that it is my responsibility to make time for the child and do all I could for him/her. I was shocked to see that I would be the only one to have the baby. I feel that I could achieve so much joy in watching my child grow up and succeed in life. I'd give my child all of my support and love."

This young man went through quite an emotional experience reaching the realization that he was different in the context of the class -- not because he was an Oriental, but because he was male. Unlike his female counterparts, he was willing to raise a differently able child. It is interesting to note that he says he is willing to give the time to care for this infant. A number of questions remain,however. Neither the young man nor the young women in the group overtly raised the issue that, still, in this society,in the majority of cases, the primary caretaker remains the mother. How did their implicit recognition of this fact affect their different responses? From a quite different perspective, could an Oriental's experience of war affect his attitudes toward the termination of a pregnancy?

A female student in the same small group as the previous male student was profoundly affected by the discussion and expressed some very important and wide-ranging views on abortion. Moving from a 19th Century

individual perspective on this issue, she reflected on some profound social questions. This journal entry, written towards the end of the semester, displayed ambiguity, doubt and yet an awareness of society's lack of commitment and care for the differently able. She said:

> "Today, the topic of our lecture was once again 'Dilemmas.' It seemed almost as if we had made a complete circle and returned back to September 4th (the day we began the course and spoke about dilemmas). Our discussion began with Gloria's dilemma of whether or not to abort her Down Syndrome baby. In the group I worked with, the women seemed to reach a consensus that Gloria should abort. However, the one man in our group said he felt Gloria should have the baby and that, he, as Gloria's husband would take care of it. Many thoughts came in my mind as we discussed Gloria's options. We spoke of a 'normal, fulfilled life.' I wonder do we have any idea what a normal life is? We also spoke of ourselves - how many of us would abort so we wouldn't have to live with our own failure as women as well as take our frustrations out on an innocent child. Surely, this reflects our own selfishness (myself included). I wonder if we feel that we should abort because society in no way, shape or form supports a child with Downs Syndrome being born to parents who are poor. A child with Downs Syndrome needs endless care and supervision which society doesn't provide free of charge. Gloria could give up her child for adoption. This in some ways is worse than abortion. I think she would know everyday that there was a child out there, her child, calling someone else 'Mom.'"

In her discussion, this young woman moved from self-blame (Abramson, Seligman and Teasdale, 1978; Cloward and Piven, 1979; Folger, Rosenfield, Grove and Corkran, 1978; Lerner, 1970; Wortmand and Dinzer, 1978) in feeling selfish in not wanting to have the child, to an awareness that society in many ways should be blamed. Aware of options, but also aware of the injustice of many of these options (Fine, 1979, 1981), this student moved from a model of 19th Century liberalism to one of more care and concern for the greater good.

On Race:

One student displayed consciousness raising as well as growth when her journal entries are placed in chronological perspective. In September, she wrote:

> "Our second discussion was on the book Sulla by Toni Morrison. I read this book when I was about 13 years old because it was in my mom's bookcase. At the time I didn't see all the deeper meanings and implications underlying the story line. This discussion has prompted me to read the book again. I'm going to ask my mother to send it here. The book really says a lot about black women and the way society views them as well as the way they view themselves. This discussion also included black males and how they are viewed in society. ---- This class really showed me that the way society views people affect their behavior and ultimately how they view themselves."

In November, the same young woman stated:

> "No matter how many times we are told that we (I too am a black woman) are dumb and are not as 'good' as the white woman, we have to move on and triumph. In a 'Black Feminist's Search for Sisterhood' it is said that a black woman is only worth what she can do for a black man. We have to realize that this is not true. We are important and have worth because we exist as human beings. Our being woman and/or being black should not detract from this. When black women of the world realize this, we will truly be liberated and not only that, we will also be set free."

This student's growth reflected a change from self-awareness, to recognition of social injustice, to a need for activism. Early on in the course, she perceived the effect society has had on her own self-perception as a black woman in the U.S.; by the end of the course, she moved beyond this awakening to a feeling of solidarity with black women and a very real wish to change society.

On Pornography

On the issue of pornography, one student realized that feminists do not all speak with one voice. Below she grappled with complexity.

> "I had never even thought that there were feminists who thought that there were advantages to pornography. I had always been for it as a free speech issue, but never thought that it had advantages. I do think that the questions comes down to a large part who controls society. If both sexes are equal, then pornography will reflect that and show more equal views. Whose responsibility is it to portray a 'proper' view? While it would be nice for the media to show positive things for society, it simply shows what there is a demand for. Thus I would think that it is more important to change society in general than try to ban pornography. Plus, I don't know if it should be banned. While the Barnard incident was terrible, I think it might mean something that feminists are no longer feminists first and only. Rather, they can argue over differing views. I don't know whether this would be counterproductive, but it does mean that there is enough security in the movement to not sacrifice other views for the sake of feminism."

Two other students expressed their attitudinal shifts in the following ways respectively:

> "I thought I would never oppose the anti-pornography movement. It just proves to me how necessary it is to search underneath one's surface opinions, no matter how valid they seem, again making me realize how much I don't know."

> "I was surprised by the articles we were assigned to read today. I suppose I was naive, but I believed all feminists would be against pornography. The articles I read appeared to approve pornography. The first guest speaker was a student in the Women's Studies Program. He did a very good job explaining how he views the way the feminists split on the pornography issue. I still have my doubts, but I do feel a little better with the idea of feminists who are also for pornography.

Another student attempted to face the issue of pornography in a most direct fashion. Her insights were very interesting particularly when she discussed her reactions to one of our guest speakers, an undergraduate male Women's Studies major, and when she spoke of her own attempt to study pornography in the city.

"I was impressed (in fact, looking back on the whole class, this is not an unusual reaction) with our guest speakers. Marc Ostfield presented his ideas about pornography in a clear fashion. His "confusion," as he called it is only too familiar to me. I've fluctuated between pro-sex and anti-porn and anti-anti-porn for months now. Although I tend to associate myself with the pro-sex advocates, this theory does not always ring true to practice. After frequenting the porn section of 14th and Arch in Philly, my views changed a bit. I felt the sterility and isolation of this world of pornography; it was not easily accessible to me. But I do not believe this is beause I am a woman; I think, rather, that this sense of alienation was the result of my sensitive and private self. It is awfully difficult to merge private words, images, acts with a vibrant, public display of them. I felt as if I had walked into someone's bedroom, someone's private space."

The same student discussed not only pornography but situational ethics in general as she carried on in her journal entry and discussed another guest speaker who was a professor of communications. She wrote:

Dr. X was equally impressive. She approached our class with new questions, unique questions, not exclusively porn related. What is our personal definition of censorship? of freedom of speech? of civil liberties? And, then, how does this apply to the pornography issue? What a great approach.--

Although I had a sense of Dr. X's own beliefs, she was wonderful in discussing and throwing out all sides. She constantly said, 'Well, who says that?' 'I never said that.' 'Well, only some believe that' 'Who's to say that is wrong?' 'See, that's what you believe, what about the other views?' So we heard a lot of sides. And confusion was the norm. Dr. X asked us to question our stance, not necessarily to change it, but just to think about it and all that it means."

However, while one student was able to grapple with situational ethics by the end of the course, another continued to be confused by the concept.

> "The grad student who spoke to us today was very broadminded. He brought up several issues - the First Amendment - the image of porn, etc. and he discussed them freely. Dr. X, however, I found to be a bit confusing. She would ask pointed questions and frequently interrupt those who were debating her. Moreover, the impression she left on me was a muddled one - it had no focus. She would question whether or not porn was related to gun use and then discuss ideas that confirmed that it was. She seemed very set in her assertion that porn was a quantifiable evil."

It is hard to believe that the two preceeding students quoted attended the same class. The first student, a female, felt that Dr. X was careful not to let her beliefs become too important, although she had a sense of what she believed in, while the male student made the assumption that Dr. X was against pornography. In point of fact, she was not. The male student continued to make stereotypical assumptions. On the issue of pornography as well as around the context of situational ethics, female students appeared somewhat more willing to deal not only with a change of attitude on the topic but also more easily with complexity, uncertainty and doubt than their male counterparts.

Discussion of Ethical Issues and Conclusions

A major aim of this course was to help students to explore the internal contradictions within 19th Century Liberalism upon which both we as teachers and they as students built our understanding of morality and

ethics. Liberal thought, which we inherited from the Enlightenment and our 19th Century forefathers glorified the isolated and competitive individual, ignored the significance of a social context for the individual and her/his thoughts and actions, and denied the legitimacy of difference within a complex heterogeneous world. We also wanted students to leave our class with an ability to hear the voices of those who are perceived to be different -- of the marginal and the disempowered. Additionally, we hoped that they would gain new understandings of complex social problems by providing both historical perspective and contemporary analysis of the issues. Further, we intended to provide students with enough background of the situational context of social problems to enable them to make intelligent ethical decisions to moral dilemmas. Did we achieve our objectives?

In their writings, many students expressed a movement away from secure, 19th Century liberal beliefs, with a focus on individual rights, to an awareness that the individual is shaped by society -- that the individual's abilities, values and options are socially constructed. They also explored an earlier - indeed medieval assumption - that society as a collective force has a responsibility to care for the needs of the whole as often as for individuals and for families.

Situational ethics followed as history and contemporary life were juxtaposed and as the private and public spheres merged. Some of our students were comfortable with ambiguity, doubt and changes over time -- others were not. It is interesting to note that on the whole it was the

females rather than the males who were more comfortable with doubt. Perhaps it had to do with Gilligan's findings (1982) that often when girls or women were asked questions concerning an ethical dilemma, their answers were perceived to be indecisive or ambiguous. However, as we've seen, complex kinds of dilemmas over critical social issues may require our students to doubt, to deal with ambiguity, and to have difficulties determining good from bad, or right from wrong. Moreover, what was once determined to be a feminine approach to ethical decision-making may prove to be a fairer and a more gender-neutral way of handling a situation.

Student writings and discussions indicated that they should be exposed to thoughtful analysis of complex ethical dilemmas, where variables of sex, race, ethnicity, class, disabilities and other perceived difference exist. Acknowledgement of injustice and discrimination in society are key to understanding how best to make a sound, ethical decision. Once these variables are taken into account, decisions are far from the easy abstractions and reasoned judgement they once might have been thought to be. And once this layer of problem-solving is discovered, the "other voices" of care, concern, altruistic emotions and social responsibility can be heard.

One of our students described the feelings she had as she dealt with complex issues requiring situational ethics. She wrote:

> "I left the class, feeling challenged to debate and explore ethics -- to realize that it is not a cut and dry area. And to start asking and reading and listening without feeling crushed or stripped or vulnerable. Only if I ask and explore will I learn, after all; I can still feel passion and conviction, but I will leave myself open for new knowledge and different ideas. At times I feel confused and insecure, but the benefits far outweigh the advantages; it is worth the risk."

The future of feminist ethics will surely involve risk. Doubt and uncertainty will be a part of that future. But to create modifications in self and society, moving what we have learned in the private sphere to the public domain, will be far from an easy matter. Pearsall spoke of feminist ethics's future when she wrote:

> "We cannot predict what feminist ethical theory will eventually look like or what forms it will take, but we know it will be the collective work of many women thinkers. We are now in the process of the feminist 'reconstruction of self and society.' What can be said is that feminist ethics will have certain features. First, it will be highly personal; it will draw on the shared experiences of women's everyday lives. Second, it will have an emancipatory promise, for it is founded on a liberationist philosophy. Along with social and political philosophy, philophy of art, and philosophy of religion and their concomitant areas of inquiry, moral theory as developed by feminists may be seen as undoing patterns of conceptual dominance that before seemed permanent (what Dale Spender calls 'the intellectual double-standard') (Pearsall, 1986, xiv)."

References

Abramson, L., Seligman, M., and Teasdale, L. Learned helplessness in humans: Critique and reformulation. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 1978, 87, 49-74.

Aker, J., Barry, K. and Esseveld J. Objectivity and truth: Problems in doing feminist research, Women's Studies International Forum, 1983, 1, 423-435.

Bennett, W. "To reclaim a legacy": Text of report on humanities in education. Chronicle of Higher Education, Nov., 1984, 28.

Bok, D. Beyond the ivory tower: Social responsibilities of the modern university. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Caplan, A. and Callahan, D. Ethics in Hard Times. New York: Plenum Press, 1981, pp. ix-x.

Cloward, R. and Piven, F. Hidden protest: The channeling of female innovation and resistance, SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 1979, 4, 651-669.

Coyner, S. Women's studies as an academic discipline: Why and how to do it. In Bowles, G. and Duelli-Klein, R.,(Eds.), Theories in Women's Studies. Berkeley, CA: University of California, pp.18-40.

Duelli-Klein, R. How to do what we want to do: Thoughts about feminist methodology. In Bowles, G. and Duelli-Klein, R.,(Eds.), Theories in Women's Studies. Berkeley,CA: University of California, pp.48-64.

Eichler, M. The double standard: A feminist critique of social science. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980.

Ehrlich, T. Common issues of professional responsibility. Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics, Spring, 1987, in press.

Fine, M. Options to injustice: Seeing other lights. Representative Research in Social Psychology, 1979, 10, 61-77.

Fine, M. An injustice by any other name. Victimology: An Internationl Journal, 1981, 1-4, 48-58.

Folger, R. Distributive and procedural justice: Combined impact of "voice" and peer opinions on responses to inequity. Journal of Personality and Socal Psychology, 1979, 37, 2253-2261.

Gilligan, C. Moral development in the college years." In Chickering,A. (Ed.) The Modern American College. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981.

Gilligan, C. In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Honig, B. Last chance for our children. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1985.

References (con't)

Kohlberg, L. Moral stages and moralization: The cognitive-developmental approach. In T. Lickona (Ed.) Moral Development and Behavior: Theory, Research and Social Issues New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976.

Kohlberg, L. The philosophy of moral development. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981.

Kohlberg, L. and Turiel, E. Moral developement and moral education. In G. Lesser (Ed.) Psychology and Educational Practice. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1971, pp.410-65.

Lerner, M. The desire for justice and reactions to victims. In J. Macaulay and L. Berkowitz (Eds.) Altruism and Helping Behavior. New York: Academic Press, 1970, 205-229.

Mosher, R.(Ed.) Moral education: A first generation of research and development. New York: Praeger, 1980.

Metcalf, L. (Ed.) Values education: Rational strategies and procedures. Washington, D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1971.

Mosher, R. and Lockwood, A. The effects of values clarification and moral development curricula on school-age subjects: A critical review of recent research. Review of Educational Research, 1978, 48, 325-64.

Nebraska Sociological Feminist Collective. A feminist ethic for social science research. Women's Studies Forum, 1983, 6, 535-543.

Noddings, N. Fidelity in teaching, teacher education, and research for teaching. Harvard Educational Review, Nov. 1986, 56, 496-510.

Pearsall, M. Women and values: Readings in recent feminist philosophy. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Inc., 1986.

Purple, D. and Ryan, K. (Eds.) Moral education: It comes with the territory. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing Co., 1976.

Raths, L., Harmin, M. and Simon, S. Values and teaching. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1966.

Roland Martin, J. Bringing women into educational thought. Educational Theory, Fall 1984, 34, 341-353.

Ryan, K. The new moral education. Phi Delta Kappan, November, 1986, 68, 228-233.

References (con't)

Shapiro, J. and Reed, B. Considerations of ethical issues in the assessment of feminist projects: A case study using illuminative evaluation. In H. Moore, et. al. (Eds.) Feminist Ethics and Social Science Research, to be published by Mellon Press.

Shapiro, J. and Reed, B. Illuminative evaluation: Meeting the special needs of feminist projects. Humanity and Society, November, 1984, 8, 432-441.

Sichel, Betty A. Women's moral development in search of philosophical assumptions. Journal of Moral Education, October, 1985, 14, 149-161.

Smith-Rosenberg, C. Disorderly conduct: Visions of gender in Victorian America, New York: Alfred A.J Knopf, 1985.

Smith-Rosenberg, C. The female world of love and ritual: Relations between women in Nineteenth-Century America, SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 1(1), 1975, 1-29.

Westkott, M. Feminist criticism in the social sciences, Harvard Educational Review, 1979, 49, 422-430.

Wortman, C. and Dinzer, L. Is an attributional analysis of the learned helplessness phenomenon viable? A critique of Abramson-Seligman-Teasdale reformulation. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 1978, 87, 75-90.

WOMEN'S STUDIES 02

WOMEN AND MEN AND THE ETHICAL CRISIS OF THE 1980'S

Fall, 1986

Instructors: Drs. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Joan Shapiro
Women's Studies Center, 106 Logan Hall
898-8740 (Class meets in Room 318, Williams Hall)

Date of Class	Topics, Suggested Readings and Guest Speakers
Sept. 4	Introduction - Social Construction of Power: Gender, Race, Class, Sexual Orientation, Disability
Sept. 11	Polarity of Gender: Woman as "Other" Readings: Perkins Gilman, C. The Yellow Wallpaper Olsen, T. "I Stand Here Ironing," A House of Good Proportion, Murray, M.(ed.) Horner, M. "Femininity and Successful Achievement," Feminine Personality and Conflict, Bardwick, J. et al (eds.) Hooks, B. Ain't I Woman? (Introduction) Guest Speaker: Dr. Jeanne Marecek, Chair, and Associate Professor Psychology Dept., Swarthmore College
Sept. 18	Polarity of Gender: Male as Dominant Readings: Mailer, N. White Negro Cleaver, E. First Essay, Soul on Ice Stowe, H. B. Uncle Tom's Cabin, Chapts. 4 & 33 Jones, L. "The Deempsey-Liston Fight" and "American Sexual Reference: Black Male," Home Guest Speaker: Dr. Houston Baker, Professor, English Dept., University of Pennsylvania Robert Schwartz, Principal, Greentree School, Philadelphia
Sept 25	The Social and Anti-Social Family Readings: Chodorow, N. Reproduction of Mothering, Chapt 1 Barrett, M. The Anti-Social Family (Excerpts) Roth, P. Portnoy's Complaint Eastman, C. "Marriage Under Two Roofs" On Women and Revolution, Cook, B.W. Stack, C. All Our Kin, (Introduction) Guest Speaker: Dr. Julia Erickson, Vice-Provost, and Assoc. Professor, Sociology Dept., Temple Univ.

Date of Class	Topics, Suggested Readings and Guest Speakers
Oct 2	Work and Social Inequality Readings: Hillsman, S.T. & Levenson, B. "Job Opportunities of Black and White Working-Class Women." *Women and Work*, Kahn-Hut, R. et al. Coser, R.L., "Stay Home, Little Sheba: On Placement, Displacement and Social Change." *Women and Work*, Kahn-Hut, R. et al Goldin, C. "Female Labor Force Participation: The Origin of Black and White Differences, 1870-1880," *Journal of Economic History* Milkman, R. "Women's History and the Sears Case." *Feminist Studies*, 12(2), Summer, 1986. Madden, J.F. "The Persistence of Pay Differentials: The Economics of Sex Discrimination," pp.76-114 Sternhell, C. "Life in the Mainstream," *Ms. Mag.*, pp.48-51, 86-89. Guest Speaker: Dr. Janice Madden, Associate Professor, Regional Science, University of Pennsylvania
Oct 9	The Psychology of Personal Violence Readings: Fine, M. "Coping with Rape" *Imagination, Cognition and Personality* Walkowitz, J. *Jack The Ripper* Brines, W. *Issue on Violence* (Selections) Guest Speaker: Dr. Demie Kurz, Senior Research Associate, Health Management Assoc., Lecturer, Sociology Dept., University of Pennsylvania
Oct 16	M I D - T E R M E X A M I N A T I O N
Oct 23	The Body Politic: Abortion, Sexuality Readings: Committee for Abortion Rights and Sterilization Abuse, *Women Under Attack* Marshner, C. *The Traditional Woman* Smith-Rosenberg, C. *The Body Politic: Abortion, Deviance and the Sexualization of Language* Guest Speaker: Dr. Carol Joffe, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, Bryn Mawr College

Date of Class	Topics: Suggested Readings and Guest Speakers
Oct 30	Institutions of Social Control: The Ethics of Discrimination Law Readings: Vorcheimer vs. School District of Philadelphia (1975-76) Newberg vs. Board of Public Education, School District of Philadelphia (1982-83) Education Readings: Thomas, M.C. Diary, (Excerpts) Bok, D. "Access to the University and the Problem of Inequality," Beyond the Ivory Tower Shapiro, J. Incentives for Women in Education: At Risk or Prepared? Selection of Four Children's Books - two to illustrae boys' sex roles; two to illustrate girls' sex roles Guest Speaker: Germaine Ingram, Lecturer, Law School University of Pennsylvania
Nov. 6	Sexual Preference Readings: Rich, A. "Compulsory Heterosexuality," SIGNS Boswell, J. "Revolutions, Universals and Categories," Salmagund Rieff, P. The Impossible Culture: Wilde as a Modern Prophet (Selections) Rowbotham, S. & Weeks, J. Socialism and the New Life: The Personal and Sexual Politics of Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis (Selections)
Nov. 13	Conditions of Women's Lives: Women of Color Readings: Walker, A., The Color Purple Wallace, M. "A Black Feminist's Search for Sisterhood," But Some of Us are Brave Hull, G. et al. Higginbotham, E. "Two Representative Issues in Contemporary Sociological Work on Black Women," But Some of Us are Brave, Hull, G. et al Johnson McDougald, E., "In Defense of Black Women, Black Women in White America, Lerner, G. (Ed.) Bolden, D. "Organizing Domestic Workers in Atlanta Georgia," Black Women in White America Guest Speaker: Dr. Sandra Paquett, Assistant Professor, English Dept., University of Pennsylvania

Date of Class	Topics, Suggested Readings and Guest Speakers
Nov. 20	Reproductive Technology Readings: Hubbard, R. "Personal Courage is not Enough: Some Hazards of Childbearing in the 1980's" in Test-Tube Women, Arditti, R. et.al. (eds) Rapp, R. "XYLO: A True Story" in Test-Tube Women. Arditti, R. et. al. (eds.) Guest Speaker: Dr. Michelle Fine, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania
Dec. 4	Pornography/ Feminist Movement Readings: Griffin, S. Pornography and Silence; Harper & Row 1981, pp. 103-111 Dworkin, A. Pornography: Men Possessing Women Peregree, 1979, pp. 13-47, 153-158. MacDonald, S. "Confessions of a Feminist Watcher" Film Quarterly, pp. 10-16. Willis, A. "Anti-censorship of Porn" in Powers of Desire, Ann Snitow, 1983, pp. 460-467. Renna and MacMillan, "Building Feminist Organizations," Quest Fisher and Mamick, "Race and Class: Beyond Personal Politics," Quest Deckard, B. "The New Struggle for Liberation: American Women, 1960 to the President." The Women's Movement Freemen, J. "The Women's Liberation Movement: Its Origins, Structures, Impact, and Ideas." Women: A Feminist Perspective, Freeman, J. ed. Guest Speakers: Dr. Larry Gross, Professor, Annenberg School of Communications, Univ. of Penn. Dr. Carolyn Marvin, Assoc. Professor, Annenberg School of Communications, Univ. of Penn.

Assignments

Oct 16 Mid-Term Examination
Dec 12 Final Paper

Thoughout the semester, you are asked to keep a journal to be handed in on Oct 16 and Dec 12.

Readings are on Reserve at Rosengarten Library; The Women's Studies Seminar Room, 5th Floor of Van Pelt, will also have readings.